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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-38 and 48-69, without prejudice.
Please amend claims 39, 41, 45, and 46, as follows:
Please add new claims 70-77, as below:

1-38. (Canceled)

39. (Currently amended) A sound recording and image forming system, comprising:

a memory circuit for storage of data; a print engine that applies printing material to sheets of print media that are pre-cut to a predetermined size and fed to said print engine as needed upon the occurrence of a print job; a microphone; an interface circuit; and at least one processing circuit that is configured to control a flow of data: (a) from said interface circuit, and (b) between said print engine and said memory circuit; wherein:

said microphone generates an audio-frequency signal from received sound waves;

said interface circuit receives and converts said audio-frequency signal generated by said microphone into a digitized first data signal, wherein at least a portion of said digitized first data signal comprises information representative of said received sound waves in a form that can be stored in said memory circuit; and

said at least one processing circuit is further configured: (c) to receive said digitized first data signal from said interface circuit, (d) to convert said digitized first data signal into a second data signal comprising a print job that includes information representative of said received sound waves, and (e) to transfer said second data signal to said print engine for recording as a hard-copy printout upon ~~a~~ said print media, in which at least a portion of said hard-copy printout is representative of said received sound waves, wherein

(a) said portion of said hard-copy printout that is representative of said received sound waves comprises encoded dot patterns that do not form text characters, but instead said encoded dot patterns correspond to the received sound waves without regard to whether or not the received sound waves form spoken words; and

(b) said encoded dot patterns that correspond to the received sound waves are printed on a surface area of said print media that does not contain other image data that is to be viewed by a person.

40. (Original) The system as recited in claim 39, wherein said microphone and said interface circuit are one of: (a) resident on a computer device that is physically separate from said print engine; and (b) resident on an image forming apparatus which also incorporates said print engine.

41. (Currently amended) The system as recited in claim 39, wherein said system provides an automatic record mode that records said received sound waves and automatically creates said hard-copy printout, said mode commencing upon a first manual action performed by a user and terminating upon one of the following events:

(a) after a first predetermined period of time, as selectable in advance by said user;

(b) after a second predetermined period of time, as automatically determined by an amount of physical space that remains available upon ~~a sheet~~ one of said sheets of print media;

(c) upon a second manual action by said user; and

(d) upon a lack of received sound waves of a predetermined minimum audio level for a third predetermined time period.

42. (Original) The system as recited in claim 41, wherein said second predetermined period of time is graphically displayed in a graphic preview mode of operation.

43. (Original) The system as recited in claim 39, wherein said system stores one of said first data signal and said second data signal as a file in one of: (a) said memory circuit; (b) a first bulk memory device that is resident on an image forming apparatus that also contains said print engine; and (c) a second bulk memory device that is resident on an external computer.

44. (Original) The system as recited in claim 43, wherein said file comprises one of: (a) uncompressed data; (b) lossless compressed data; (c) lossy compressed data; (c) a WAV file, and (d) an MP3 file.

45. (Currently amended) ~~The system as recited in claim 39, further comprising:~~ A sound recording and image forming system, comprising:

a memory circuit for storage of data; a print engine; a microphone; an interface circuit; and at least one processing circuit that is configured to control a flow of data: (a) from said interface circuit, and (b) between said print engine and said memory circuit; wherein:

said microphone generates an audio-frequency signal from received sound waves;

said interface circuit receives and converts said audio-frequency signal generated by said microphone into a first data signal, wherein at least a portion of said first data signal comprises information representative of said received sound waves; and

said at least one processing circuit is further configured: (c) to receive said first data signal from said interface circuit, (d) to convert said first data signal into a second data signal comprising a print job, and (e) to transfer said second data signal to said print engine for recording as a hard-copy printout upon a print media, in which at least a portion of said hard-copy printout is representative of said received sound waves; and

an optical scanner that generates a third data signal from scanning a sheet of hard-copy media, wherein:

at least a portion of image information on said hard-copy media comprises audio information;

at least a portion of said third data signal is representative of said audio information; and

said at least one processing circuit is further configured for one of: (f) to convert said third data signal into a fourth data signal comprising a print job, and to transfer said fourth data signal to said print engine for recording as a hard-copy printout upon a print media, in which at least a portion of said hard-copy printout is representative of said audio information; and (g) to store one of said third data signal and said fourth data signal as a file in a bulk memory device, wherein said file comprises one of: (i) uncompressed data; (ii) lossless compressed data; (iii) lossy compressed data; (iv) a WAV file, and (v) an MP3 file.

46. (Currently amended) ~~The system as recited in claim 39, wherein said at least one processing circuit is further configured:~~ A sound recording and image forming system, comprising:

a memory circuit for storage of data; a print engine that applies printing material to sheets of print media that are pre-cut to a predetermined size and fed to said print engine as needed upon the occurrence of a print job; a microphone; an interface circuit; and at least one processing circuit that is configured to control a flow of data: (a) from said interface circuit, and (b) between said print engine and said memory circuit; wherein:

said microphone generates an audio-frequency signal from received sound waves;

said interface circuit receives and converts said audio-frequency signal generated by said microphone into a first data signal, wherein at least a portion of said first data signal comprises information representative of said received sound waves; and

said at least one processing circuit is further configured: (c) to receive said first data signal from said interface circuit, (d) to convert said first data signal into a second data signal comprising a print job, (e) to transfer said second data signal to said print engine for recording as a hard-copy printout upon a print media, in which at least a portion of said hard-copy printout is representative of said received sound waves; (f) to receive an additional audio-frequency signal from said microphone; (g) to convert said additional audio-frequency signal and to automatically append said additional audio-frequency signal as a further portion of said second data signal; and (h) to record said further portion of said second data signal as part of said hard-copy printout.

47. (Original) The system as recited in claim 46, wherein a maximum amount of remaining recording time is graphically displayed in a graphic preview mode of operation, based upon an amount of physical space that remains available upon said hard-copy printout.

48-69. (Canceled)

70. (New) The system as recited in claim 45, wherein said microphone and said interface circuit are one of: (a) resident on a computer device that is physically separate from said print engine; and (b) resident on an image forming apparatus which also incorporates said print engine.

71. (New) The system as recited in claim 45, wherein said system provides an automatic record mode that records said received sound waves and automatically creates said hard-copy printout, said mode commencing upon a first manual action performed by a user and terminating upon one of the following events:

(a) after a first predetermined period of time, as selectable in advance by said user;

(b) after a second predetermined period of time, as automatically determined by an amount of physical space that remains available upon one of said sheets of print media;

(c) upon a second manual action by said user; and

(d) upon a lack of received sound waves of a predetermined minimum audio level for a third predetermined time period.

72. (New) The system as recited in claim 71, wherein said second predetermined period of time is graphically displayed in a graphic preview mode of operation.

73. (New) The system as recited in claim 46, wherein said microphone and said interface circuit are one of: (a) resident on a computer device that is physically separate from said print engine; and (b) resident on an image forming apparatus which also incorporates said print engine.

74. (New) The system as recited in claim 46, wherein said system provides an automatic record mode that records said received sound waves and automatically creates said hard-copy printout, said mode commencing upon a first manual action performed by a user and terminating upon one of the following events:

(a) after a first predetermined period of time, as selectable in advance by said user;

(b) after a second predetermined period of time, as automatically determined by an amount of physical space that remains available upon one of said sheets of print media;

(c) upon a second manual action by said user; and

(d) upon a lack of received sound waves of a predetermined minimum audio level for a third predetermined time period.

75. (New) The system as recited in claim 73, wherein said second predetermined period of time is graphically displayed in a graphic preview mode of operation.

76. (New) The system as recited in claim 46, wherein said system stores one of said first data signal and said second data signal as a file in one of: (a) said memory circuit; (b) a first bulk memory device that is resident on an image forming apparatus that also contains said print engine; and (c) a second bulk memory device that is resident on an external computer.

77. (New) The system as recited in claim 76, wherein said file comprises one of: (a) uncompressed data; (b) lossless compressed data; (c) lossy compressed data; (c) a WAV file, and (d) an MP3 file.